

May 24, 2017

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to you as travel service providers who offer legal, authorized travel to Cuba. The last several years have seen a huge growth in the number of U.S. authorized travelers visiting Cuba through our services, which has in turn strengthened our businesses and helped the Cuban people. We're optimistic that your Administration will take our insight into consideration and identify and value these benefits of increased travel to Cuba to both the American and Cuban private sectors as part of the current U.S.-Cuba policy review.

The increase in American visitors to Cuba has had a significant impact on our businesses by increasing our revenue and allowing us to hire more American employees. Additionally, it has helped the Cuban private sector, and fostered strong relationships between Americans and Cuban religious organizations and humanitarian programs.

Allowing travel on a general license has streamlined an overly bureaucratic process of receiving permission to travel to Cuba. This has allowed our companies to better focus on strengthening our services as the tedious process of applying for case specific approvals has been removed. Additionally, it has allowed U.S. officials to spend more time focusing on real national security threats, such as organized crime and terrorism, and not waste resources on investigating Americans who simply wish to exercise their right to visit our island neighbor.

Aviation agreements between the U.S. and Cuba have reduced the price of travel to Cuba for U.S. travelers and offered considerably more routes. This makes travel to Cuba more orderly, convenient and safe, and has greatly increased the likelihood of U.S. travelers to visit the island. Additionally, it has made it easier for Cuban-Americans to visit their loved ones on the island.

Due to increased demand, our companies have brought on additional staff to handle the high volume of travel to Cuba. This is good for the local economies where we operate and the national economy. We are providing jobs to American workers, paying local and federal taxes and contracting U.S. companies for our services. With continued growth, we will continue to hire more American workers and support the U.S. economy. A rollback of the current policy would lead to significant layoffs at many of our companies.

Many U.S. travelers visiting Cuba stay in privately run B&Bs, dine at private restaurants, hire independent taxis and purchase goods and services from entrepreneurs. They are greatly supporting the growth of the Cuban private sector. U.S. travelers often visit with Cuban religious organizations, building important links between faith communities. Moreover, many travelers visit and provide support to independent community organizations and cultural programs.

U.S. travelers to Cuba are the best ambassadors of American society. They interact and develop meaningful relationships with Cubans at all levels of society and promote U.S. culture and economic interests, preserving business opportunities for U.S. companies currently losing out to competitors from other countries. We encourage your administration to take note of the wide-ranging U.S. economic benefits and prioritize economic growth and job creation in the review of U.S. policy toward Cuba.

Sincerely,

ABC Charters
Academic Arrangements Abroad
AltruVistas
American Society of Travel Agents
Art Quest International
Backroads
Blanco International Service
Blasa Mana Corporation
Caribbean American Children Foundation
Caribbean Biking Company
Caribe Express Inc
Carlson Maritime Travel
Classic Journeys
Collette Vacations
Cuba Cultural Travel
Cuba Educational Travel
Cuba Tours and Travel
Cuba Unbound
Cubapuentes
CubArtEdu
CubaTOUR
Diaspora Exchange Solutions (DiasporaES)
Distant Horizons
Education Travel Alliance
Experience Cuba
Friendly Planet
Fund for Reconciliation and Development
Geo Ex
Global Arts/Media
Global Exchange
Holbrook Travel
insightCuba
Interplanner
Jensen World Travel
Marazul Charters
Mejdi Tours
National Tour Association
Ocean Passages
Photo Workshop Adventures
The Orvis Company
The Special Travel
Turismo Tony Perez
United States Tour Operators Association
Va Cuba
Wilson International Service
Xael Charters